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Report of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget on its sixty-seventh session

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland, from 12 to 14 March 2014

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I. Agreed conclusions adopted by the Working Party at its sixty-seventh session

A. Review of the implementation of the communications strategy and publications policy of UNCTAD

(Agenda item 3)

The Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget

1. *Notes* with appreciation the secretariat's detailed report on the implementation of the communications strategy and publications policy, the report on the readership survey and other information supplied by the secretariat;

2. *Welcomes* the continued progress made in the implementation of the communications strategy and the publications policy, and encourages the secretariat to continue its efforts, including through enhanced internal coordination and coordination with member States, through their permanent missions in Geneva, in promoting the work of the organization with a view to ensuring the widest possible outreach to all stakeholders, particularly policymakers both in developing and developed countries, with the objective of enhancing the trade and development impact and visibility of UNCTAD;

3. *Welcomes* the notable improvements to the UNCTAD website and the increased application of new technologies, and encourages the secretariat to reinforce its effective online presence including through the use of social media;

4. *Encourages* the secretariat to reassess its methods and strengthen its capacity to monitor and evaluate its media and online presence;

5. *Calls upon* UNCTAD to maintain close cooperation between the secretariat and member States, through their permanent missions in Geneva, and to continue improving the dissemination of information through more sustainable means, where appropriate, and enhancing the usability and content of the website and Delegates Portal;

6. *Requests* the secretariat to continue to assess and report on the impact of its publications and improve the level of feedback on the readership survey and to continue the promotion and outreach of all its programmes and publications via the appropriate means, in order to further enhance their quality and accommodate the different needs of users;

7. *Urges* the secretariat to enhance synergies between UNCTAD publications and the other pillars of UNCTAD with a view to enhancing the implementation of the recommendations contained in its publications, and encourages the secretariat to further streamline its publications where appropriate;

8. *Notes* with satisfaction the secretariat's efforts to improve the timely translation of documents, and encourages the secretariat to continue to prepare documents on time and to work with the United Nations Office at Geneva to ensure that documents and publications are translated and delivered on time.

B. Consideration of the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy
(Agenda item 4)

The Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget

1. *Appreciates* and takes note of the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy for technical cooperation activities, prepared by the secretariat as an implementation of a recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit report of 2012 and relevant Trade and Development Board decisions, and the facts and analysis contained therein, and recognizes it as a useful basis for ongoing discussion on the fundraising strategy;

2. *Recognizes* the respective proposals of the Group of 77 and China, European Union and its member States and JUSSCANNZ group on the goals and principles of the fundraising strategy;

3. *Requests* the regional coordinators to meet informally, on a regular basis, to agree on a set of common goals and principles for the fundraising strategy in order to respond to the needs of developing countries as the ultimate goal of the strategy, taking into account the proposals of the regional groups, to be presented for consideration at the next session of the Working Party in September 2014.

II. Chair's summary

A. Proceedings

1. The sixty-seventh session of the Working Party on the Strategic Framework and the Programme Budget was held in Geneva, Switzerland, on 12–14 March 2014, to review the implementation of the communications strategy and publications policy of UNCTAD and consider the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy for technical cooperation activities.

B. Opening statements

2. The following speakers made opening statements: the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD; the representative of Ethiopia, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China; the representative of Madagascar, on behalf of the African Group; the representative of Jordan, on behalf of the Asian Group; the representative of Trinidad and Tobago, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries; the representative of Greece and the regional coordinator, on behalf of the European Union and its member States; the representative of the United States of America, on behalf of the JUSSCANNZ group; the representative of Belarus, on behalf of Group D; the representative of Egypt; the representative of China; the representative of Morocco; the representative of Pakistan; the representative of Paraguay; the representative of Algeria; and the representative of Ecuador.[1]

3. The Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD summarized the progress made in the implementation of the communications strategy and publications policy of UNCTAD and results of the readership survey, and provided an overview of the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy for technical cooperation activities and its main goals and recommendations.

[1] The representative of Ecuador was not present at the meeting (see para. 39).

4. With regard to agenda item 3, the representatives of all regional groups and delegations commended ongoing efforts to implement the communications strategy and publications policy. One delegate praised the coherence, relevance, innovation, quality and efficiency of UNCTAD's communications strategy. Many representatives and delegates made reference to these efforts with respect to the Accra Accord and the Doha Mandate.

5. Many delegations welcomed the improvements UNCTAD had made to its website. One delegate suggested that greater emphasis could be given on the website to the role played by UNCTAD in defining the post-2015 agenda. Another delegate said that the website was more user-friendly and requested additional information on the posting of tweets.

6. Several delegations commended the progress made in communications with member States. The representatives of some regional groups commended the improved functionality of the Delegates Portal and other online tools. The Guide for Incoming Delegates was highlighted as particularly useful. One representative, while welcoming the innovation of the Delegates Portal, said that the contact directory was not comprehensive which made it difficult to locate relevant UNCTAD managers and staff. Some delegations requested that a better system of notifying permanent missions in Geneva of UNCTAD activities and of visits of national experts to UNCTAD be put in place.

7. The representatives of several regional groups commended the increased use of social media, such as Twitter, with some welcoming the fact that the UNCTAD Secretary-General had opened a Twitter account. One representative suggested that other UNCTAD officials should also take up Twitter as a means of communication, while another representative noted that there was room for improvement in UNCTAD's use of social media.

8. On the subject of internal communications, the representative of one regional group said the further development of the intranet should enhance inter-organizational transparency and communications, as well as overcome the "silo structure" in different parts of UNCTAD and weak communication between management and staff.

9. With respect to the publications policy, the representatives of some regional groups welcomed the efforts to continue the streamlining of publications, on the grounds of environmental benefits and reduced printing costs and in favour of increased electronic means of dissemination. The representative of one regional group called for further progress in the electronic publication of some flagship reports. The representative of another regional group urged the secretariat to move towards a change in policy on hard copies and the strengthening of alternative paperless solutions and, in the same spirit, called for an "opt-in" system for hard-copy mailings.

10. The representatives of one regional group and one delegation emphasized that the dissemination of printed copies of flagship reports remained important for developing countries. The representative of the regional group underlined that differences in the use of technology from one country to another and between rich and poor countries had to be taken into consideration and that the dissemination of printed copies of reports could only be reduced with this in mind. She suggested that a study on the impacts of migration to electronic dissemination on African countries be conducted. Several delegations reminded the secretariat that the needs of developing countries had to take precedence in the publications policy.

11. The representative of one regional group expressed caution with regard to the streamlining of publications. While recognizing a certain logic to streamlining, there was a need to ensure that the existing flagship publications and other studies relevant for policymakers were not adversely affected. One delegation supported the streamlining of publications as long as the publications kept reflected the range of themes relevant for

developing countries and maintained their characteristic quality. These two parameters should be measured to have an accurate record of the relevance of the research and analysis pillar and to determine any adjustments of the parameters needed. Thus, to realize these objectives, the delegation called on the secretariat to ensure that UNCTAD had adequate resources, whether regular or extrabudgetary, to conduct its work in this pillar.

12. The representatives of some regional groups mentioned that problems remained in the timeliness of the translation of reports from English into other United Nations languages. One representative added that the translation of flagship reports into French was often, but not always, delayed. Translations into French were an important factor for communications with francophone Africa.

13. The representatives of several regional groups welcomed the positive results of the most recent readership survey, but noted the low response rate it had received from Governments in particular. One representative said that the secretariat could do more to "sensitize" permanent missions in Geneva to the survey in order to relay the need for member States to participate in it. Another representative said that ways of improving the response rate by Governments to the readership survey must be sought by the secretariat, including through the use of information and communications technology tools such as e-mail alerts.

14. In relation to agenda item 4, the representatives of several regional groups supported the conclusions and recommendations contained in the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy for technical cooperation activities. Some representatives urged agreement on the draft document at the present session of the Working Party. One representative further expressed his wish that the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy for technical cooperation activities be presented for approval at the Trade and Development Board as soon as possible.

15. The representative of one regional group proposed that the regional coordinators work together to prepare a joint non-paper on a commonly identified list of general goals and principles for the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy for technical cooperation activities. The joint non-paper would be subsequently submitted to the secretariat. It would serve as the basis for a new document based on the list of goals and principles that would be prepared by the secretariat and presented at the session of the Working Party in September 2014. The representative of one regional group supported this proposal, and the representative of another regional group said he would continue to engage with partners to work on the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy for technical cooperation activities.

16. The representatives of some regional groups expressed their concern over the limited financial resources available for technical cooperation activities, while the representatives of several regional groups underscored the importance that they attached to the sustainability and predictability of the resources available.

17. One delegation supported the recommendations included in paragraphs 85 and 86 of the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy for technical cooperation activities. He underscored the importance for donors to provide timely, predictable, flexible and sustained financial contributions for UNCTAD's operational activities, as also mentioned in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. Another delegation noted that the lack of predictable funds compromised the effectiveness of the technical cooperation pillar of UNCTAD work.

18. The representative of one regional group stated that earmarked funding did not ensure country ownership in developing countries.

19. One delegation stated that his country would support the establishment of a non-earmarked multi-donor trust fund to finance UNCTAD's technical cooperation activities.

20. Another delegation asked whether it was not time to change the structure of financing of UNCTAD's technical cooperation.

C. Informal meetings

21. The Working Party pursued its deliberations in an informal setting.

D. Review of the implementation of the communications strategy and publications policy of UNCTAD

(Agenda item 3)

22. The Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD introduced the agenda item, presenting the review of implementation of the communications strategy and publications policy of UNCTAD (TD/B/WP/259) and the report on the readership survey of main publications of UNCTAD for 2013 (TD/B/WP(67)/CRP.1).

23. The review detailed the continued progress made in implementing the communications strategy. Building on past improvements, UNCTAD's web presence and its social media presence and impact were enhanced, while targeted information products continued to be issued. Improvements in communications with member States were made, notably through informal, open exchanges with the UNCTAD Secretary-General. Efforts to improve communications with policymakers, civil society, universities and research institutions, the press and media, and UNCTAD staff were also summarized.

24. With regard to the publications policy, the review noted that the streamlining of publications continued in 2013, with a focus on relevance and quality. Optimizing the dissemination of publications remained the secretariat's focus, which aimed at a balance between dissemination through electronic means and distributing hard copies of publications to meet the demands in some developing countries.

25. The 2013 readership survey was the sixth systematic survey on publications, which showed generally positive results. The relatively low response rate for many publications required analysis, and the secretariat would continue to examine ways of receiving a broader range of responses.

26. The secretariat responded to several questions and comments from member States.

27. With regard to the many observations made on the streamlining of publications, the secretariat confirmed that the focus had been on reducing the number and volume of publications wherever possible to gain in efficiency and better communication, as well as to adapt to an environment of budgetary cuts and the need to realize economies. Streamlining was undertaken with careful consideration of being able to deliver UNCTAD's mandate and respond to the needs of member States.

28. One delegate asked how UNCTAD determined the target audience for publications. The secretariat explained that the target audience was identified through a consultative process that had taken place in the context of preparing the communications strategy and publications policy.

29. Another delegate asked about the role of the secretariat and its Publications Committee in planning and preparing publications. The secretariat provided details on the leadership of the Publications Committee and the Committee's role in deciding, implementing and monitoring the publications policy as well as topics for flagship publications.

30. Another delegate asked about how the quality of publications was ensured through peer reviewing, policy clearance and editing. The secretariat provided an explanation of how each of these processes contributed to improving quality.

E. Consideration of the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy
(Agenda item 4)

31. As part of the ongoing efforts to strengthen UNCTAD management and administration, the secretariat circulated the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy for technical cooperation activities in March 2013, as contained in the document UNCTAD/OSG/MISC/2013/1.

32. The Deputy Secretary-General briefly summarized the document. He noted that it provided information about the current situation and existing mechanisms of UNCTAD relations with donors and proposed actions that could be undertaken to improve UNCTAD's capacity to fundraise for technical cooperation activities. The document proposed recommendations addressed to the secretariat, donors and beneficiaries.

33. The representative of one regional group noted that the strategy should contain actionable items rather than only statement of principles. She therefore suggested that regional groups continue to hold informal consultations with a view to developing a set of action-oriented goals and principles for the strategy and a precise time frame so as to ensure progress is made in the coming months. This proposal was supported by the representative of another regional group. On the other hand, the representative of another regional group considered that the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy for technical cooperation activities prepared by the secretariat was a good document and should be considered as the basis for further actions.

34. During the informal consultations, three different proposals on principles and goals for the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy for technical cooperation activities were submitted by three regional groups. It was agreed that a set of common goals and principles for the strategy would be prepared and presented to the Working Party in September 2014.

35. At the closing plenary, the representative of one regional group said that it was unfortunate that a tighter time table on the fundraising strategy could not be agreed at the session as this was in the interest of all member States. She noted her willingness to engage in this objective and urged partners to engage proactively to achieve the road map agreed. The representative also stressed the importance of agreeing on an effective and focused fundraising strategy to support UNCTAD technical assistance activities, diversify the donor base and attract funds. Other organizations had developed effective and modern fundraising strategies and she did not want UNCTAD to lag behind. It could be interesting in the context of informal discussions to look at what was being done elsewhere.

36. The representative of another regional group stated that she was encouraged by progress made to move forward and take concrete steps and noted her willingness to support work on the strategy.

III. Organizational matters

A. Election of officers

(Agenda item 1)

37. The Working Party elected Mr. Mohamad Elmurtada Mubarak Ismael (Sudan) as its Chair and Ms. Débora Ponce (Guatemala) as its Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

B. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

(Agenda item 2)

38. The Working Party adopted its provisional agenda (TD/B/WP/258). The agenda was thus as follows:

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Review of the implementation of the communications strategy and publications policy of UNCTAD
4. Consideration of the draft UNCTAD fundraising strategy
5. Provisional agenda for the sixty-eighth session of the Working Party
6. Other business
7. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

C. Provisional agenda for the sixty-eighth session of the Working Party

(Agenda item 5)

39. At its closing plenary meeting on 14 March 2014, the Working Party adopted the provisional agenda for its sixty-eighth session (see annex I).

D. Other business

(Agenda item 6)

40. Also at its closing plenary meeting, the Chair informed the Working Party that he had received an opening statement from the representatives of Ecuador who had been unable to attend the session. The delegation requested that the substance of its opening statement be incorporated into the report of the meeting.

E. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

(Agenda item 7)

41. The Working Party authorized the Rapporteur to finalize the report on its sixty-seventh session.

Annex I

Provisional agenda for the sixty-eighth session of the Working Party

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Review of the technical cooperation activities of UNCTAD and their financing
4. Evaluation of UNCTAD activities
   - (a) Evaluation of UNCTAD activities: Overview
   - (b) External evaluation of UNCTAD subprogramme 2: Investment and enterprise
   - (c) Follow-up on evaluations
     - (i) Progress report on the implementation of recommendations from the external evaluation of UNCTAD subprogramme 1: Globalization, interdependence and development
     - (ii) Progress report on the implementation of the workplan for implementing recommendations from the evaluation of UNCTAD's programme on science and technology for development
5. Provisional agenda for the sixty-ninth session of the Working Party
6. Other business
7. Adoption of the report of the Working Party to the Trade and Development Board

Annex II

Attendance[1]

1. Representatives from the following States members of the Working Party attended the session.

Austria
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belarus
China
Ecuador
Germany
Guatemala
India
Japan
Kazakhstan
Nigeria
Pakistan
Russian Federation
Senegal
Sudan
Switzerland
United States of America

2. Representatives from the following States members of UNCTAD but not members of the Working Party attended the session:

Algeria
Angola
Benin
Chile
Côte d'Ivoire
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Dominican Republic
Egypt
El Salvador
Ethiopia
Finland
Greece
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Jamaica
Jordan
Lesotho
Madagascar
Mali
Mexico
Morocco
Oman
Paraguay
Peru
Poland
Portugal
Republic of Moldova
Saudi Arabia
Spain
Trinidad and Tobago
United Arab Emirates
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Viet Nam
Zimbabwe

3. The following intergovernmental organization was represented at the session:

European Union

4. The following United Nations organization was represented at the session:

International Trade Centre

5. The following specialized agencies were represented at the session:

International Telecommunication Union

World Trade Organization

[1] This attendance list contains registered participants. For the list of participants, see TD/B/WP(67)/INF.1.